

# ***FIRE DEPARTMENT WANTS TO KEEP YOU SAFE THIS HOLIDAY***

Thanksgiving Day is just a few days away, and as you're planning your menu you should also plan how to stay safe in the kitchen. Every year on Thanksgiving Day, firefighters across the nation respond to an average of 1,300 home cooking fires, triple the average for any other typical day. With this in mind, Rome Firefighters want to offer some tips to keep everyone safe during your holiday feast.

"This is known as a day of eating hearty, but it's also a day of intense cooking when stovetops are working overtime," according to Brian J. Townsend, Jr., a member of the Fire Department's Fire Prevention task force. "These culinary activities bring an increased risk of fire, particularly when people are trying to prepare several dishes while entertaining friends and family. Just being aware of some of the things that can happen and being ready if they do, can help avoid most accidents," according to Townsend.

Here are some cooking tips to follow:

- Start off with a clean stove and oven. Remove any dried on food or grease before you start cooking.
- Stay in the Kitchen when you are cooking food. If you leave the kitchen, even for a short period of time, turn off the stove.
- Keep items that can catch fire – oven mitts, wooden spoons, towels, food packaging, curtains – away from the stove top.
- Don't wear baggy clothes which can get caught and cause spills, burns or fires.
- Be alert ! If you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the oven or cook top.
- Double check everything is off when you are ready to eat dinner, or leave the house.

If you have a cooking fire:

- Get out and stay out! When you leave close the door behind you to help contain the fire and call 911 from a safe location.
- If it is an oven fire, turn off the heat and keep the door closed.
- Keep an oversized lid nearby to smother a small grease fire. Never move a pan with burnt liquid or hot grease.
- If in doubt – Call 911.

With the popularity of turkey fryers increasing, firefighters also want to warn of some of the dangers involved when deep frying a turkey. Fire Departments across the US respond to nearly 1,000 fires each year in which a deep fryer is involved. The National Fire Protection Association says deep fryer fires cause an average of 5 deaths, 60 injuries and over \$ 15 Million in property damage each year.

"More than a third of these fryer fires start in a garage or patio area," According to Lt. Timothy W. Reilly of the Fire Department. "Be sure to cook outside and at least 25 feet from any structure. Stay away from anything that can burn easily and keep the fryer off of wooden structures or decks." Reilly said most of these accidents occur when the fryer is left unattended or is used by someone inexperienced. "Make sure your turkey is properly thawed," Reilly warns. "Frozen or partially frozen turkeys placed into the fryer can cause a real disaster. When the frozen turkey comes into contact with the hot oil, the water vaporizes causing steam bubbles to pop and spray hot oils. Keep a fire extinguisher approved for cooking fires nearby and call 911 for help should anything happen."

Fire Chief Ronald M. Brement also reminds us that this is a good time to check smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors as well. One of the leading causes of non functioning detectors is dead batteries, and this could be a time when you need your detector the most. "There is so much potential for things to go wrong during the rush of the holiday. Take a moment and test your detectors now, so they may give you the early warning to avert a potential problem when you least expect it," Brement said.

With our City being no different than the remainder of the country, Rome has experienced three cooking fires over the past five years on Thanksgiving Day. One in 2005 on S. James St., another in 2006 on Valentine Ave. and most recently in 2007 on Rome-Lowell Rd. All three fires were extinguished with no structural damage due to the quick response of Rome Fire Department. The most notable Thanksgiving Day fire in Rome occurred in 1974 when the Townsend Shoe Store burned on West Dominick St.

For more tips on keeping your holiday enjoyable and your home safe visit the Underwriters Laboratory website at [www.safetyathome.com](http://www.safetyathome.com) click on Thanksgiving Cooking Tips under "Seasonal Safety".